

CASE STUDY: Ski To Sea Race

Location:	Bellingham, Whatcom County, WA
Event:	Ski to Sea Race & Festival
Annual Savings Estimate:	\$425
Contact:	Rodd Pemble, Sanitary Service Company Recycling Manager (360) 734-3490; Rodd@ssc-inc.com

Background

The Sea to Ski Race & Festival in Bellingham, Washington includes about 3,500 race participants and over 50,000 spectators. Along with the race, the festival includes the Grand Parade through downtown Bellingham.

Every Memorial Day weekend the 85 mile long relay race starts at the Mt. Baker Ski Area and ends in Fairhaven on the south side of Bellingham. The race includes seven relay legs, and at the beginning of each there is a staging area where racers exchange their team's time chip and spectators cheer. At the end of the race in Fairhaven there is always a crowd and festival welcoming in the race participants. This many people and festivities can create a lot of waste, but in 2008 the Sanitary Service Company (SSC) and the Ski to Sea Green Team worked together to reduce waste entering landfills.

Past Recycling Activities

Recycling containers for bottles and cans have been placed along the Grand Parade route, at each relay leg of the race, and throughout Fairhaven since 2001, but contamination has often been a problem. 90-gallon roll carts with "festival" style lids (gasketed hole in lid for bottles/cans) were clearly labeled, but were not always matched with a garbage can, and volunteer monitors were not available during the event.

2008 Recycling Results

In 2008, in coordination with the Green Team, SSC recovered about 950 pounds of recycled bottles and cans for an estimated 30% recycling rate. Volunteer monitors at the finish line at Marine Park kept 17 roll carts of bottles and cans free of contaminants. Roll carts along the race route were contaminated as in years past, showing the importance of monitors.

Sanitary Service Company also tried implementing their FoodPlus! program at Marine Park, since it is the only location on the route that includes food vendors. The FoodPlus! program recycles yard waste, food-soiled paper, and food scraps. 60-gallon roll carts were matched with separate roll carts for bottle/cans and garbage.

Despite the presence of monitors, all the FoodPlus! containers were contaminated with garbage. SSC plans to train monitors more extensively in the future to help keep food waste

bins uncontaminated. The Ski To Sea committee also anticipates limiting Marine Park vendors to compostable or recyclable items since most of the garbage was from free giveaways wrapped in nonrecyclable plastic.

Savings

Compared with garbage disposal, each 90-gal roll cart of bottles and cans recycled saves an estimated \$8.00, while a 60-gal roll cart of clean compostables saves an estimated \$7.00.

Other Activities

In 2008, the Bellingham Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the Ski to Sea Race Committee formed a “Ski to Sea Green Team.” This team looks at ways the Ski to Sea Race can reduce its carbon footprint during race days, from eliminating plastic water bottles (vs. compostable paper cups) and promotional race packets (vs. information emailed to all participants). The team has started carpooling for the volunteers and race participants to the different starting locations for the different legs of the race, and, in 2009, will offer low cost bus service from Bellingham to the start of the race. They also promote Park & Ride bus service for transportation to the Fairhaven festivities.